

I came to Congress to change the way business is done in Washington. As part of the democratic process, Americans need and deserve transparency from their government. I'm working to bring to Congress not just high ethical standards, but also disclosure and accountability to make these standards effective. Below is a description of several actions I supported and helped enact to make Congress more transparent and accountable, putting the interests of my constituents ahead of special interests.

Lobbyist Reform When I took office in January of 2007, one of my first votes in Congress was to pass the strictest ethics rules in history that changed the way business was done in Washington. We breathed new life into an Ethics Committee that had been allowed to become a shell under Republican leadership. We broke the link between lobbyists and legislators: no gifts, no private jets, and no meals from lobbyists. That May, we strengthened these rules even further, ending the tight-knit relationship between lobbyists and lawmakers. The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 (H.R. 2316) and the Lobbying Transparency Act (H.R. 2317) increase the disclosure requirements for contributions to lawmakers, establish an online, searchable database of lobbyists' disclosure information and takes other steps to increase the transparency of lobbyists' activities. Our government is better because of these landmark pieces of legislation.

Accountability in Contracting

I've worked to help pass a package of reforms to the federal contracting process to open it up to competition. This will save tens of millions of taxpayer dollars each year.

Earmark Reform The Democratic Congress has adopted rules requiring Members of Congress who request an earmark to disclose in writing the name and address of the intended recipient, the purpose of the earmark, and to certify that the member (and spouse) have no financial interest in the request. We have prohibited the use of earmarks to reward or punish a Member of Congress for any vote he or she might cast. And we require that all matters before a conference committee, including earmarks, be subject to full and open debate, and that members have an opportunity to review the conference agreement before it is signed.

The Appropriations Process I'm committed to setting the highest standards of openness and transparency in my office. I have set up a public process for submitting funding requests, and I am now posting every single request I submit for appropriations on my website at:

To view these proposed projects,
[click here](#)

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I am eager to find investments that create real value and economic development in the Hudson Valley, and I am willing to put my signature on any request for funds I submit.

To make certain that each project meets the most rigorous standards, my office followed a five

step process in reviewing applications. 5 Step Process: **Step 1:** I invited applications from local governments, nonprofits, Fire and Police Departments, and other local organizations that wished to request appropriations in order to ensure that strong ideas emerged from the ground up. My staff worked with groups all across the district to instruct applicants on the proper appropriations procedures and guidelines.

Step 2:

Based on written applications, face-to-face meetings, and project tours, I evaluated the projects based on key criteria. Each project must meet at least one of the following criteria before I submit it to the House Appropriations Committee as a funding request.

It must:

- create jobs;
- promote local economic development opportunities;
- improve public health and safety;
- protect the environment; or
- promote energy independence

Step 3: I posted these projects on my website on April 3, 2009, the day the requests were made to the House Appropriations Committee. My website listing includes an explanation of what each project would do for the 19th District and the reasons for investing federal funds in the district. **Step 4:** I also sent the House Appropriations Committee a letter for each of these projects certifying that I will not benefit financially from any of these requests.

Step 5:

When each appropriations bill comes up for a vote, it will be accompanied by a list identifying each earmark and which members requested it. These lists will be made publicly available ahead of the vote.

To view my Appropriations requests,
[click here](#)

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